

# COLOMBIAN NEWS AND VIEWS

The Official Organ of the Mennonite Brethren Mission in Colombia

VOL. III—NO. 14 [1?]



JANUARY, 1963

## NEW MISSIONARIES

"UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING  
ABUNDANTLY . . . BE GLORY."



Rev. and Mrs. Wilmer A. Quiring and Naomi Ruth left by plane from New Orleans on Aug. 26, 1962, and after a stop-over of one day in Panama arrived in Cali, Colombia, on the 29th. Some of the brethren from the mission station at La Cumbre were there to meet them. At present the Quirings are studying the Spanish language in preparation for work especially in the National Day School at La Cumbre. Mrs. Quiring is also teaching music at the Missionary Children's School. The Lord marvelously opened the way for the Quirings to enter Colombia when the doors seem closed to new workers.

Miss Herta Voth arrived by plane in Cali, Colombia, on June 24, 1962. After a short stay in La Cumbre, she went to Istmina, Choco, where she is studying Spanish. As soon as she has the language she will be operating the dispensary there. The Lord has wondrously kept the doors open for nurses to enter Colombia.



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## SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

November 2, 1951—Sharon Faith was born to Rev. and Mrs. Jacob A. Loewen of Noanama to complete a trio of girls.

June 7, 1952—Misses Kathryn Lentzner and Mary Schroeder arrived in the United States for their year of furlough after serving six years on the field.

June 24, 1952—Miss Herta Voth arrived in Cali, Colombia, for her first term of service as a nurse.

June 12, 1952—Misses Lillian Schafer and Annie Dyck left for their second term on the field after spending a year in the homeland. Miss Schafer is stationed in La Cumbre, whereas Miss Dyck is working in Istmina.

August 1, 1952—Donald John came to make his home with Rev. and Mrs. Daniel A. Wirsche at Istmina. He completed the boys quartet.

August 29, 1952—Rev. and Mrs. Wilmer A. Quiring and Naomi Ruth arrived on the field for their first term of service.

October 11, 1952—Joanne Gail arrived at the home of Rev. and Mrs. David Wirsche of Noanama. She is the first-born.

October 19, 1952—Rev. and Mrs. John A. Dyck and Roland, Rodney and Nancy left for their second term of service in Colombia.

November 23, 1952—Five believers were baptized and received into the church at Istmina.

January 1, 1953—Miss Mary Schroeder was married to Mr. John J. Harder at Herbert, Sask. Mr. Harder is from Reedley, Calif.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES A MISSIONARY CALL

1. A deep conviction of the universal need of the Gospel.

2. A deep conviction that God wills all people to hear the Gospel and that God is no respecter of persons.

3. The realization of our means to meet that need—the Gospel.

4. A deep sense of personal inadequacy of inability and of unworthiness or of an obstacle or hindrance in the way to follow the Lord.

5. The realization of our ability to meet that need (preparation) or our willingness to secure the ability.

6. A wholehearted and complete yielding to the task of meeting that need.

7. Very often accompanied by an inner satisfaction and growing conviction.

—Dr. G. W. Peters.

# PRAYER



1. Pray that Isaac (left) may come back to the Lord. He has backslidden while attending a technical school in Bogota. Pray also for Belarmino who has had one year of Bible school and is now working in Cali to earn money to continue.

2. Pray for the work among the Indians. This little Indian boy (left center) needs physical as well as spiritual help. The fancy pattern on his body is painted with black juice from a tropical vine.

3. Pray for the conversion of Cholo (right center) who for a number of years has been the launch driver at Istmina. He can neither read nor write.

4. Pray for the recovery of Pacho, Istmina's most promising young man, who has come down with tuberculosis.



5. Pray for the newly baptized believers and the new converts.

6. Pray that Miss Susan Suderman of Reedley, Calif., may soon have her visa to enter Colombia as a nurse.

7. Pray for Rev. and Mrs. Wilmer Quiring and Miss Herta Voth in their language study.

8. Pray daily for each missionary that they might be channels of the Lord to the salvation of many souls.



# GET AQUAINTED WITH . . .

Wilmer Allan Quiring was born to Mr. and Mrs. John E. Quiring at Mennon, Sask., on Aug. 17, 1919. He grew up on the farm at Mennon and graduated from grade school there.

He was saved in his home during the summer of 1938. Many times previously the Lord had spoken to him but he had disobeyed. That Friday night of his conversion the speaker in his home church emphasized the coming of the Lord for His saints and that only those who were washed by the blood of the Lamb would find entrance into heaven. The Holy Spirit convicted Mr. Quiring of his sinful life and that night after coming home he sought the Lord for forgiveness of sins. In a few days after much praying and reading of the Scriptures peace and assurance came to his soul. The following year he was baptized by his grandfather, Rev. Jacob Lepp, at the Dalmeny church.

Mr. Quiring took his high school by correspondence. He graduated from the Hepburn Bible School at Hepburn, Sask., in the spring of 1947. During this time he felt the Lord was calling him for some specific field of service and therefore to further preparation. The Lord opened the way to attend the Pacific Bible Institute at Fresno, Calif., and during the first semester his calling was made sure. In 1949 he received his AB in Christian Education and in 1950 his ThB.

At the Institute he met Eugenia Fowler, who also felt called into mission work. They were united in marriage on July 23, 1949, in Elmwood, Conn. While studying they were both active in migrant mission work around Fresno.

Following graduation from the Institute in 1950, Mr. Quiring took a course in History and Culture of Latin America at the Kennedy School of Missions in Hartford, Conn. While so doing, he had the opportunity to do substitute pastoral work in Hartford and also mission work among the Jamaican tobacco plant workers.

Mr. and Mrs. Quiring were ordained as missionaries on Aug. 17, 1952, at the Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno, Calif., of which they are members. Dr. G. W. Peters, Rev. B. J. Braun, and Rev. Dan Friesen officiated. A few days later they left for Colombia, South America.

Eugenia Fowler Quiring was born Feb. 24, 1932, at Hartford, Conn., where she also received her elementary and high school training. Although she had born-again parents and attended Sunday School and church the way of salvation never became plain to her until she attended a Bible Conference in Rhode Island on

Labor Day week end in 1940. That same month, after reading Romans 5:8 one day, she accepted the Lord Jesus as her Savior.

She enrolled in the Yale School of Music in 1939 and received her Bachelor of Music degree in 1943. After that she taught the primary grades in a school in Florida. While there she dedicated her life to the Lord and felt the need for further study and the seeking of the Lord's will. She then attended the Albany Bible School, Albany, N. Y., for one year. In 1947 she went to the Pacific Bible Institute at Fresno, Calif., as a student teacher, receiving her AB in Christian Education in 1949. It was there the Lord called her into mission work and led her to become the wife of Mr. Quiring. She was baptized in Fresno in October, 1950, and became a member of the M. B. Church there.

Together with her husband she attended one year at the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford, Conn., and served in the migrant mission work in Fresno as well as in the work among the Jamaican tobacco workers in Connecticut.

One child, Naomi Ruth, was born to them on Sept. 3, at Hartford.

Herta Judith Voth was born to Mr. and Mrs. Johannes T. Voth on Jan. 3, 1923, at Lugowisk, New Samara, Russia. At the age of two she emigrated with her parents to Canada. She received her public school education at Springstein, Man., where her parents are fruit farmers.

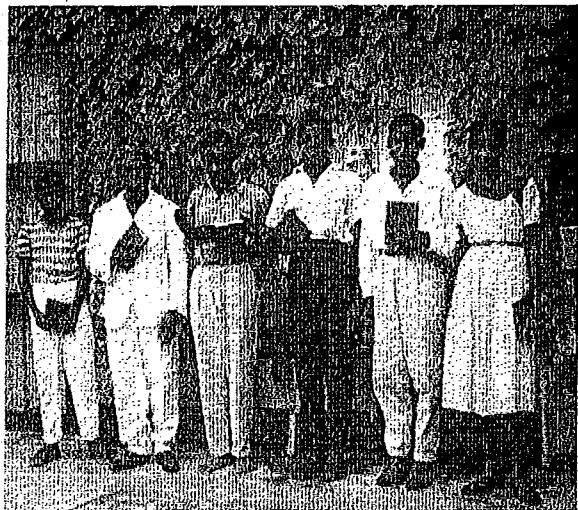
The Lord became her personal Savior in her home on Jan. 23, 1937. She was baptized and received into the M. B. Church at Springstein.

Though she took part of her high school by correspondence, she graduated from the Springstein High School in 1946. She attended the Winkler Bible School from 1943 to 1945 and again in 1950-51, at which time she graduated. Between 1947-1950 she took nurses training at the Misericordia General Hospital in Winnipeg. Since graduation she has engaged in nursing at various places.

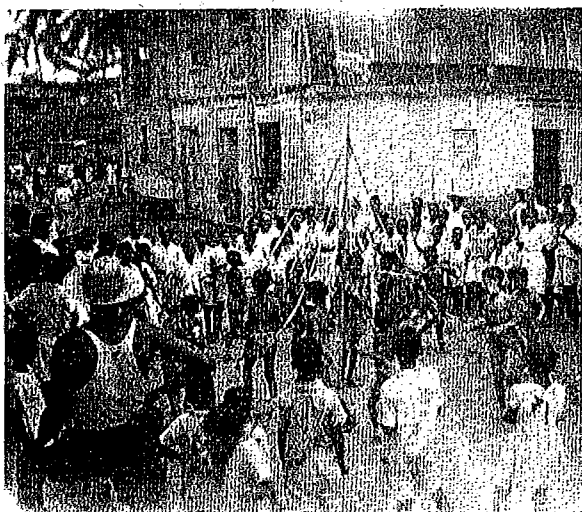
Miss Voth felt a desire to serve the Lord in a foreign field soon after conversion. After a long time of prayer and testing she fully surrendered to Him. Meanwhile she served the Lord in the Sunday School and in Daily Vacation Bible School work. In 1949 she sent her application to the Mission Board. During the year of 1951-52 she attended Tabor College. She was ordained on June 1, 1952, at Springstein with Rev. H. S. Voth, Rev. J. J. Friesen, and Rev. H. H. Janzen officiating.

# VIEWS

## From ISTMINA



The six young people who won a leather-bound Bible in a Scripture memorization contest. It was a joy to see how they valued and treasured their Bibles, but the greatest treasure is the Word of God in their hearts and minds. The young people are Esquivel Mosquera, Crispulo Amud, Leonardo Salamandra, Tarsilo Salamandra, Daniel Mosquera, and Yolanda Bryan.



One of many stunts or dances put on in the street by school children in a Catholic church festival. Drinking, dancing, carousing around are also an intrinsic part of every religious festival.

## From LA CUMBRE



Jose Gomes, an evangelical believer, is a typical Colombian farmer taking yuca to the market. Most of the produce at La Cumbre is carried on horse- or muleback to market.



The first of May is always an important day for Colombia. Here are seen our two schools, the Missionary Children's School and the National Day School, having a picnic lunch together on the Missionary Children's School campus.

# NEWS and NOAN

## WITH THE INDIANS OF THE NOANAMA LANGUAGE

"We hear them speaking in our own languages the marvellous acts of God . . . And they were struck to the heart and said' . . . 'What shall we do?' . . . And that day were added about 3000 souls." Acts 2:11, 37, 41 (Fenton).

By hearing the Word of God in their own language 3,000 souls were convicted, saved and added to the church on the day of Pentecost. This is still God's principle. In the following paragraphs you will be introduced to the Noanama Indian tribe for which your missionaries are now preparing the Bible in their own language.

**Their Origin.** According to the Geografia Economica de Colombia VI Choco (Controlaria General de la Republica, 1943) the Indians of the Choco are descendants of Antillian Caribs who came to the Choco in prehistoric times via Central America. Loukotka (Cestmir Loukotka: Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie, 74: 1-69, 1942) however, by their language, considers them independent of the Caribs and classifies the Panamanian and Colombian Pacific Coast Indian tribes under the generic name of Chócoes. The little archaeology effected in the Choco seems to bear out the fact that these Indians were the first inhabitants of the area. Loukotka (op. cit.) lists 9 languages within the Choco family, however, it seems as if today really only 5, or possibly 6 are in existence. One of these languages the Noanama Indians speak.

**Appearance.** The Indians of the Choco on the whole are of medium stature, but with wide and well formed shoulders. Their color is copper. Their facial features are very asiatic with straight black hair, black eyes and prominent cheek bones. The hair is left to fall freely and is parted in front in an inverted V form to clear the face.

They do not hide much of their anatomy with clothes. Men are content with a colored loin cloth; women wear only a skitt, which in reality is a yard and a half of cloth wrapped around the waist. Children are largely naked.

**Their Habitat.** Like their name indicates, the town of Noanama was their original capital, but the tribe was scattered throughout the San Juan River region plus the Pacific Coast region from Buenaventura on the south to the Baudo River on the north. With the advent of the conquest and the colonization, the Indian was driven away from the main rivers, and is today found almost exclusively on the smaller rivers and tributaries of the Juan. This pattern is universal except for a group at the mouth of the San Juan River. As a tribe they are still on the retreat—today the colored man being their aggressor.

**Sustenance.** Their livelihood is partly hunting and fishing, and mainly agricultural. Game is only small and very scarce. Fish are relatively rare since the mining dredges have ruined the spawning grounds. Thus the people are cast largely upon the products they raise. These include bananas, platanos, corn, rice, yucca, and yams, beside a few native fruit trees.

**Social Life.** At the time of the conquest there were large Indian villages with their headmen and a great chief for the tribe. But today their social structure is largely disintegrated, and the restricted family is the largest social unit still intact. The father, and after his death the oldest son, is the head.

The collapse of their social order has been an effective means of exterminating the tribe. Since there is no superior to dispense justice of xtrminating the tribe. Since there is no superior to dispense justice it falls upon the individual and he does so by means of poison even on the slightest provocation.

Within the family there are some attractive aspects like monogamy, marital faithfulness, and mutual affection. With marriage, which for boys is at twelve to fifteen and for girls at twelve to fourteen, the young man takes up residence with his wife's family. When trouble arises within a marriage, the bride's father is responsible to punish the woman.

**Their Religion.** Basically the Noanamas are monotheistic. They have one God, Ewandama, who is creator and God. He had a son who took part in creation but who is not God's equal. There is, however, also a devil with a number of lesser demons, but his nature seems to be more human than satanic. The souls of the dead become spirits who are neither good nor bad in themselves, but who can do either. The devil thus often persuades them to do evil to the living, even going as far as to kill them. Seemingly their only worship is centered around a corn liquor ceremony in which some chants are sung.

In the healing by medicine men God rarely figures. They deal mainly and directly with the spirits of the departed who are considered causes of evil.

The Indians were catholicized and accepted the virgin as partial goddess. According to tradition they found her sitting on a tree and crying. In recent years, however, the Roman Catholic Church has paid no attention to them and they are reviving their primitive practices.

In pre-Spanish times Noanama was the capital of a large and prosperous village. With the arrival of the conquistadors for the conquest of the lower San Juan River region, the village. In colonial times Noanama became a great center for the use of gold which was used to wrest the precious metal from the soil. The village was the chief Roman Catholic churches of the area, and

**The Population.** However, the effect of this was to reduce the population of the tributaries, and so Noanama today has not a single family except for a few families who consider themselves

The white people in the area are largely descended from a large group of Syrian merchants in the Choco region.

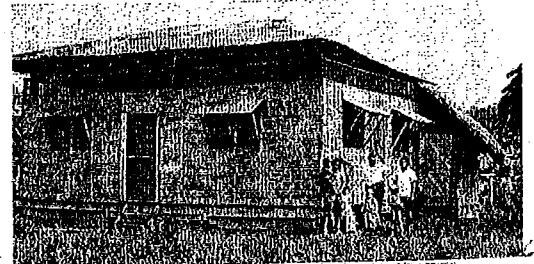
The Negro race was introduced as slaves in the Choco region and have been more or less content with their artifacts and body structure, there is little African influence. It is, however, held that they originate

**Its Industry.** In the true sense of the word the industry is in the most primitive manner and that mainly for internal consumption. The rubber industry, which flourished in the Choco region, was a Panamanian company which found its trade too small to take all the sap at once instead of bleeding, cultivation, too, has been discontinued since the advent of the Mining Company of the Choco. The little cash income there is comes from the sale of rubber in three days by canoe to Istmina.

**Culture and Religion.** The people are all nominally Catholics. The priest had visited the village for several years, however the village several times annually. The main festival of the village is the festival of the whole community participates. In pre-Spanish times the festival was devoid of all religious significance.



Rev. David Wirsche in one of the first contacts made with the Noanama Indians in 1948. These Indians used to number well over 20,000 but the conquest and white man's diseases have reduced their numbers to about 2000. The Indian in the white shirt has served several times as informant





# VIEWS of NAMA

## WITH CHOCOANOS IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

"And Jesus went all about the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity." Matthew 9:35.

Jesus, the great missionary, laid down for us the principles of sound mission work: preaching, teaching, and healing. In the paragraphs to follow you shall see how these principles are applied on the Noanama field.

### Preaching

Preaching the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ is definitely the first and foremost aim of the missionaries. You, however, attending one of our services, might hesitate to call our ministry "preaching," for almost all messages are illustrated with visual aid. This is because over 90% of the people can neither read nor write (cf. Geografia Economica de Colombia, p. 181), and the spoken Word alone makes little impression.

With the limited staff regular services are held to a minimum, but as the Word goes forth thrice weekly in the chapel and six times weekly in the dispensary, several hundreds of people come in contact with the gospel. Then as time permits the outstations Doido, Murillo, Matarrey, Negria, and Fuijado are served with the Word of God.

But as Jesus, whose preaching was as often personal as public, the workers attempt to visit a series of native homes every week. It is a difficult ministry, but effective, for here personal difficulties can be dealt with and the message "tailored" to the individual need. It is through these visits that the congregation is increased and backsliders are helped into fellowship again.

In January of this year, under the ministry of two Colombian brethren several souls came to Christ during a week of evangelistic meetings. These meetings were financed by the students of Pacific Bible Institute, Fresno, California.

### Teaching

As already intimated, it will be hard to define where preaching ends and teaching begins because our services are largely on a Sunday School basis. Even though the Spanish speaking people are nominally Catholic, they have no previous knowledge of the Scripture upon which to build. Since an indigenous church must be based on native individuals who can lead and feed the flock through personal knowledge of the Word, it has been the purpose of the mission since the very beginning to found an evangelical day school. This need was especially accentuated because as you recall over 90% of the people are illiterate, and when the mission arrived in Noanama there had been no school for years already.

When in 1950 the National Director of Primary Education gave the "green light" for schools in the Choco, the mission accepted the challenge. It was uphill all the way, but the Lord led the way and a favorable hygiene report was obtained, and after much effort also an inspection by the school inspector. Thereupon the Ministry of Education, the highest authority in the field of primary education, granted the school permit without trouble. When the school had scarcely begun the priest, using the mayor and the school inspector, ordered the school closed. In all three orders were given, but by the grace of God the school was able to function till the end of the year. When, however, no assurance was received that the school would be permitted to function without the continual local interference, the mission decided to change course and to conduct Bible Clubs instead of a school. Here the children receive something of the three R's besides Bible study.

### Healing

The ministry of healing began in a very inconspicuous way while the Loewens were building. They had determined to begin neither a dispensary nor Spanish services in view of the fact that their first duty was with the Indians. One day, however, a young lady asked for a dressing for her ulcer. To dismiss her Mrs. Loewen gave her a band-aid. A neighbor boy came and also begged for a dressing, but he, too, received only a band-aid. When one day this little boy tore his ulcer and came to the door bleeding and crying, Mrs. Loewen had to dress it. This was the beginning of the dispensary.

### Results and Prospects

Through the various efforts in the work it can be reported to you that the missionaries have gained the confidence of the people. A number have accepted Christ as their Saviour, and several are growing in grace. When one young believer got drunk one night after a quarrel with his wife, he came in tears confessing his sin. He wanted to make things right, and so on Sunday morning he publicly confessed his failure. It was a solemn moment which shook the community to the depth. It was the Lord's victory.

Another believer is a man who received a Bible from David Wirsche in 1948. He read it and believed. He is today firmly established in the faith, and shows great prospects as a leader in the indigenous church.

The prospects are excellent because the Lord is adding to His church such as abide on His name.

tal of the Noanama Indian tribe, and as such  
lval of the Spaniards it became the headquar-  
ver. Being rich in gold, it became a renowned  
eat mining center where Indian and slave labor  
il. In the village was thus built one of the ear-  
an effort was made to catholicize the Indians.

was that the Indian began to withdraw into the  
ngle resident Indian. Its population is colored  
s white, but who have strains of Negro blood.  
endants of the early Spaniards. However, there  
o who too have left many relatively white de-

about 1550 and later. They have lost their lan-  
pletely hispanized. Except for a few traces in  
source from which to gather their origin in  
ed in the Congo area of Africa.

there is no industry. Farming is done in the  
nal consumption. Gold washing is almost ab-  
ed in the past decades, was ruined by an Amer-  
nd thus sent its men out to chop down all trees  
the trees periodically. The commercial banana  
mouth of th San Juan became closed for ocean  
edges whose action caused silt deposits in the  
m extra bananas, platanos, or corn mauld

holic. When the missionaries arrived at Noanama no  
eir coming brought back the priest who now visits the  
village is called the Fiesta de Mercedes de la Virgen.  
ctice for the people it is merely a big annual drinking



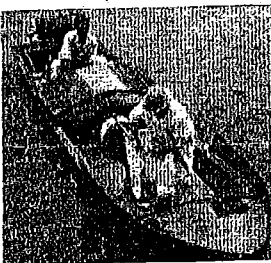
This picture stresses the two phases of work  
at Noanama station: work with the Indians  
and work with the Chocoanos. The black man  
is now professing salvation. The missionary  
is Rev. Jacob A. Loewen.





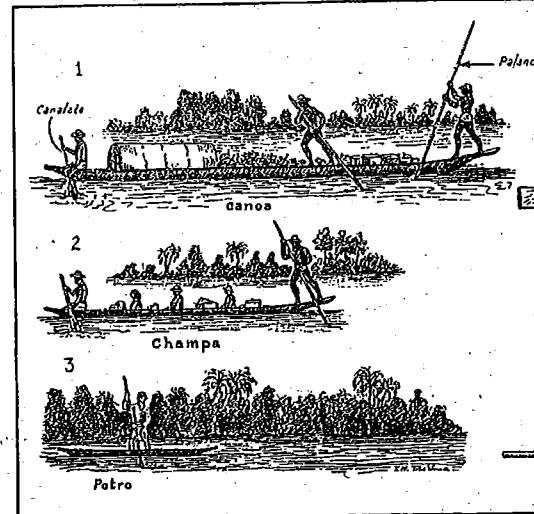
Rev. and Mrs. Jacob A. Loewen and daughters, Gladys, Joyce and Sharon. The Loewens are in charge of the station or Noanama and are doing linguistic work among the Indians. Recently Rev. and Mrs. David Wirsch joined them in the Indian work.

Miss Mary Schroeder (now Mrs. John J. Harder, see last page), who was in charge of the Spanish work and the dispensary.



The launch which is used in station work as well as to make connections with our station in Istmina.

A group of canoes and champas at the junction of two rivers.



1. Canoa—length: 24-40 feet, width: 24-36 inches, capacity: up to 2000 lbs.
2. Champa—length: 12-30 feet, width: 15-24 inches, capacity: 2-5 persons.
3. Potro—length: 6-12 feet, width: 10-12 inches, capacity: child or small person.

EXCERPTS FROM DIARY OF

September, 1942: Dr. G. W. Peters visits Noanai, many Indians and recommends the place as headquarters.  
April, 1946. Daniel A. and David Wirsche visit Indian work.

October, 1946. David Wirsche revisits Noanam.  
January, 1948. J. A. Dyck rents a native house recently to work among the Indians.

April, 1948. David Wirsche and the Loewens v  
the rented house.

**July, 1948.** David Wirsche and J. A. Loewen finished to fix the house and no common ground is found. Indians and start a tour of the field. They also look

September, 1948. By God's providence the new Dave and Jake are coming down with malaria. John Fever 105.5 for John and Jake.

December, 1948. Noanama station vacant for Dycks at Istmina.

**April, 1949.** An old native house is bought at N  
**May, 1949.** The Executive Secretary, A. E. Ja  
A location for the new missionary residence is agr

July, 1849. Loewens begin building. They live so bad that Loewens have to be under thir mosqui

August, 1949. The building is started. From cannot work alone. Oh, for a carpenter to do this is built.

**May, 1950.** The house is finished. What a treat. Chiggers torment Uncle Nels terrifically. He constantly does not relieve his itch in the least.

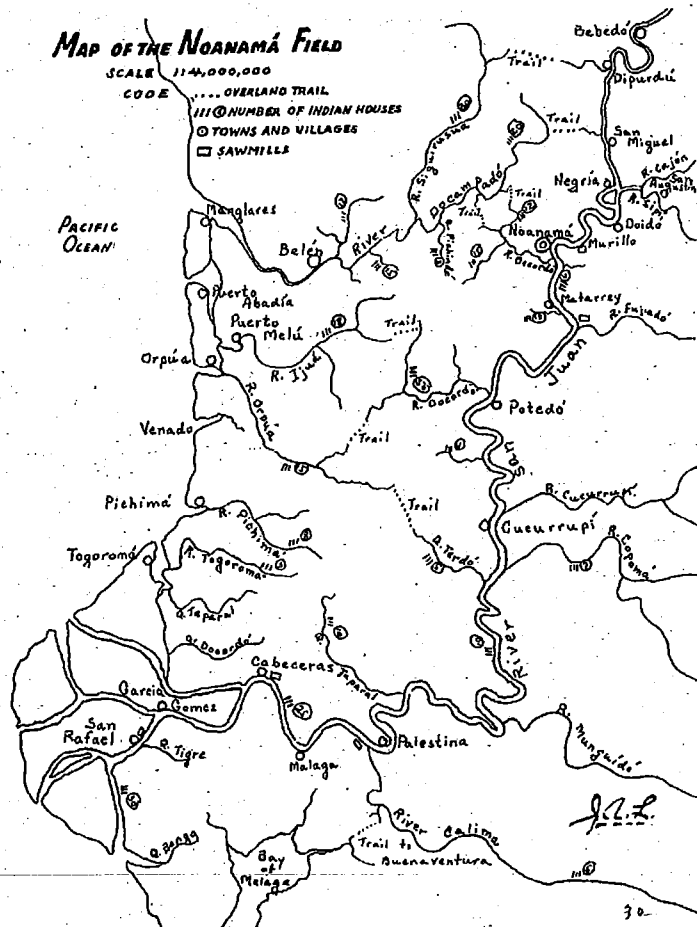
September, 1950. The missionary council send a Spanish language and in the dispensary. The old

October, 1950, to January, 1951. J. A. Loewen visits the Indians and Chocoanos on the Docampado Becordo Rivers and their tributaries. The result is large asks for the gospel. There are well over 2,000

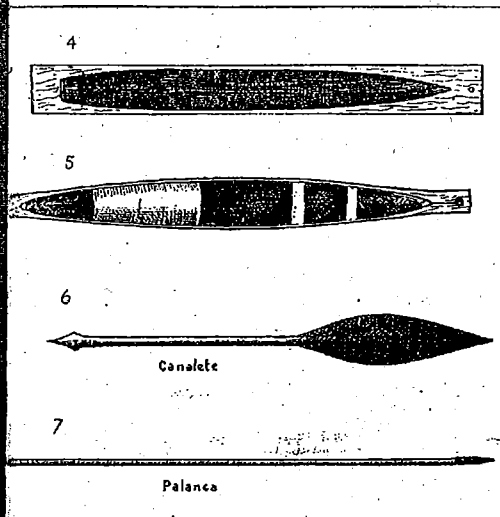
March, 1951. The administrative committee later prepares the school building.

April to November 1951. It is one big, long battle to state capital, and national capital to ward off the work remains undone.

December, 1951. The council decides not to continue to develop Bible Clubs. The Loewens are released from their contract at least their last year on the field on the Indian land.



The Roman Catholic Church at Noanama was sorely abandoned when the missionaries first arrived. Cows and goats frequented it at will, and no service had been held for several years. It has since been repaired and is now receiving regular attention.



4. View of a canoa from above.
5. View of a champa from above.
6. Canaleta—Paddle, used in deep water.
7. Palanca, used for pushing in shallow water.

## NOANAMA STATION

... during the Fiesta de Mercedes. He meets ... for a future work among the Indians. ... Noanama and find the place suitable to begin the

... by canoe and rents two rooms. ... at Noanama for the Loewens who have arrived

... at Noanama by launch and arrange for repair of

... ly come to open the station. Nothing has been ... for arrangement. David and Jake contact the ... for a place to build.

... y acquired launch comes to Noanama where both ... Dyck becomes sick on the way back to Istmina.

... months while the Loewens and Dave relieve the

... anama, and rights for 6 hectares of land acquired. ... en, visits the station and several Indian homes. ... upon.

... the rented house. Some nights mosquitoes are ... not by twilight.

... y till late one must be on the job for the men ... job! The Indian work must rest till the house

... it is to move in! C. N. Hieberts visit the sta- ... nds the fact that missionaries suffer this con-

... n Schroeder to Noanama for the work in the ... is repaired and screened for her.

... and later in company with Harry K. Bartel ... urisua, Docordo, San Juan, Ijua, Orpua, and ... conviction of a crying need. Village after vil- ... of the Noanama tribe.

... the challenge of the day school. J. A. Loe-

... rra, telegrams, and trips to local offices, ... of the enemy on our school. The Indian

... sitting on the school issue and rather to ... duties and are encouraged to spend at



The Indians inhabit the less accessible tributaries of the San Juan River. To reach them the missionaries must trek through the jungle. This picture shows pioneer J. A. Loewen on one of the first trips made to the Indians.



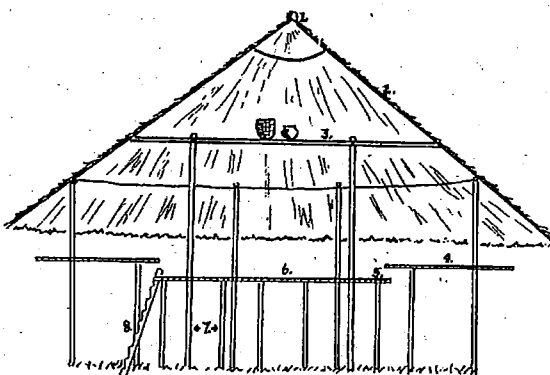
Alcides Chamarra, the Indian who is serving as informant for both the J. A. Loewens and the David Wirsches. He is largely responsible for the progress that has been made on the language.



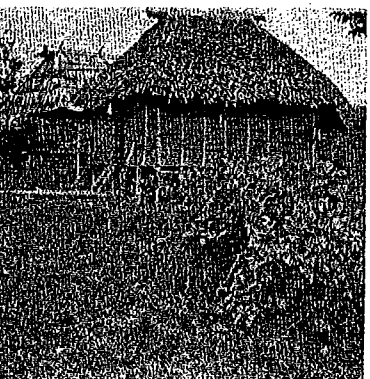
The house in the foreground is the new residence in which the Loewens live. Next to it is the old native-constructed dwelling in which Miss Schroeder lived and which is now being occupied by the David Wirsches.



A typical Indian structure built at Noanama by one of the friends of the Mission. This "tamboo" is where the informant lives when at the station and also where sick Indians may pass the night when they come to the dispensary.



1. Earthen jug
2. Roof of palm leaves
3. Storage floor
4. Elevated sleeping quarters
5. Floor of split palms
6. Living room
7. Palm posts
8. Front steps



A typical Chocoano house which the Mission built as quarters for its launch driver.



Julio Diaz, one of the faithful believers among the Spanish speaking Chocoanos, and Alcides Chamarra, the Indian informant.